PHILOSOPHY AND THE WAR

RALPH TYLER FLEWELLING

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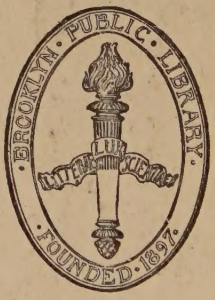

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PHILOSOPHY AND THE WAR

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INTRODUCTORY—PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

William Archer in a little volume entitled Fighting a Philosophy quotes Oscar Levy, the English exponent of Nietzsche, as saying in 1906, "Shall I prove to you that a new philosophy may be a more powerful enemy than all the navies of the world?"

While the struggle goes on that shall prove whether these words are true, there has come an appreciation such as has been markedly wanting in the common thought, that the mood and logical outcome of philosophy may be laden with the utmost moment to society. We Americans must charge ourselves with special laxity. A part of our feeling for democracy has been to allow the individual the

fullest freedom of expression. We have felt that every man had perfect liberty to mouth his opinions unmolested from the housetop, regardless of their truth, or of their influence on the common weal. Views might be obviously immoral in their outcome, subversive of the general good, or even seditious, and yet with good-natured tolerance we have put the wing of protection too often over forces which were destructive of the social fabric. The present crisis has forced upon our attention in a special way the right of society to protect itself from the enemies of the common good. So long as these forces have confined themselves to theoretical or philosophical statement we have assumed that they were practically harmless. A prominent educator is reported as saying: "This world has at last reached the stage where it sees

that philosophy is the determining factor in man's being; that conflicting notions of the way to think of and plan human existence are responsible for the bloodshed and the devastating woes which now so overwhelmingly beset the earth. A great prayer goes up from every land for sounder notions of the way to live. This red baptism of agony and death is purging us of our delusion and vanities, and bringing us to the essential realities."

We used frequently to hear that it did not matter what a man believed so long as he was conscientious. We are now beginning to see that the greatest safeguards of a democracy are the fountains of its thought. If one message more than another is being written across the scroll of the present age, it is the terrifying effect of a culture which is wanting in the spirit-

ual and moral verities. We are beginning to see how any civilization that is founded on culture alone is built upon the shifting sand. Thinking is not safe if it does not contain a note of reverence and social responsibility. A culture may be brilliant, it may have attained the maximum of efficiency from the economic or political standpoint and yet it may fail utterly of true service to society because lacking this deeper element.

For this reason there must be in the near future a backward swing from a conception of education as most to be valued and most "scientific" the more it is lacking in moral and spiritual values. The tendency has been to exalt a mere professionalism, and to restrict education to the merely technical, preparing for mercantile, professional, or industrial life, with little consideration for mental

discipline and ethical training and none at all for the finer qualities of spirit. The readjustments which must follow the present world crisis will demand something more than professional efficiency. They can be reached only as professional efficiency is joined to deep ethical and spiritual insight. I am quite aware that these sentiments will sound strange in the ears of this age. So long have we been overawed and dominated by the educational philosophy which now menaces the best of civilization that things which men see practically have not become a part of accepted philosophical expression.

The world has been fairly well surfeited with the predominance of "dollar" thinking. Where the note of reverence, of spiritual reality and social responsibility is lacking, a deadly miasma creeps into the air,

creating misunderstandings and hostilities that eventually array nations and civilizations in armed combat.

For the conscious and subconscious ideals of life, seemingly unimportant, really determine action. Even the folk-tales of a people are not unimportant. They teach a subtle philosophy which enters the common life and consciousness. The crude Samson stories sprang not only from the ethical feelings of the Jewish people, but were a strong factor in keeping Jewish youth to a high road of purity by showing the weakness that comes of wrongdoing. The modern Englishman owes something of his sense of responsibility for the weak, something of his high notion of honor to the tales of Saint George and the Dragon and the Knights of the Round Table. The legends of Faust, Tannhäuser and the Lorelei have been the expres-

sions and the impetus to a wild and irresponsible mood which has made it easy for the leaders of Germany to enter into league with the devil for the mastery of the twentieth-century world. And if it be true that we have entered upon a twilight of the gods, there are brave men who have sworn that it shall be the twilight of the gods of wrong and oppression to which men sell their souls in the hope of unlawful gains.

In calling you to consider the matter of German philosophy I do not presume to pass final judgment on all German philosophy. I do not intend to write except of those phases which in my judgment relate to the war. I do not deny nor overlook that there are better and noble elements, but I do affirm that such philosophical voices are not the ones that are being listened to in Germany at this hour.

That must be my reason for neglecting them. Because we thus confine ourselves to certain issues of German philosophy we will probably be charged with partisanship. We must here limit the discussion to those phases of German thought which take their places in the present crisis. We cannot consider those that lie crushed and defeated upon the field of German national life.

CHAPTER I

GERMAN PHILOSOPHY AS A REACTION ON LIFE

GERMAN philosophy as a reaction on life is aptly illustrated in the life and masterpiece of Goethe. That the illustration is not farfetched is manifest from the fact, of which the Germans boast, that Faust is one of the five books to be found in the knapsack of every intelligent German soldier. That the illustration is appropriate is evidenced by the events that have taken place since the war began.

Goethe's life philosophy, a foregleam of the doctrine of the superman, was simply this: the Goethe individual, because of his conscious

superiority, was to use all lesser lives (and in this case it meant all other lives) as the foil and impetus of its own development and greatness. All experiences of love and passion were to be indulged for their cultural value to the poet, but with no responsibility assumed on his part. Goethe's friends, male and female, were gathered up into his grasp and used so long as they were valuable, and then were cast ruthlessly aside. When the funeral cortêge of his best friend passed before Goethe's window, he refused to look out lest his own precious spirit be depressed by the sight. In the great work which began with his youth and ended but a short time before his death we have set out before us, as he did not intend, the tragedy of Goethe's dying soul.

It was significant of the Goethean philosophy, that while Margaret was

left to meet her moral problem according to the antiquated views of the church, after the only effective manner of salvation given among men, namely, repentance, confession, and paying the debt to society, the arch-criminal and enlightened Faust wipes from his soul the foulness of unrepented sin by looking at grass, flowers, and waterfalls. From him there is no repentance nor regret, only "Kultur." And Goethe considered Faust a true solution of the dark problem of sin. Faust is thought to be justified in the ruin of Margaret's life, because thereby his own life was made more replete. There still continue in the world multitudes of people who have small regard for Faust, the Superman, and who are keen enough to see that when Faust turned from the prison cell, abandoning Margaret to her lonely fate, all that

was noble, all that was worthy the name of manhood, died within him. That which might be called personality was ended and he had developed individuality instead. That this is not an extreme interpretation is evidenced by the best of German opinion itself.

I bring you another example of this philosophy as a reaction upon life, taken from the turbid stream a half century later.

We witness in Nietzsche the full flowering of the Goethean ethics and philosophy. Not himself a German, and despising the Prussian, Nietzsche's philosophy is the predominant philosophy of Germany to-day. A part of the German boast, already alluded to, is that a second one of those books to be found in every intelligent soldier's knapsack is Nietzsche.

To men already inflated with a false individualism and sense of greatness, for whom Goethe had prepared the doctrine that every sin is pardoned by the attainment of "Kultur," Neitzsche became the appropriate prophet. The significance of Nietzsche's philosophy lay in his reversal of all moral values. Not love, but force and power; not sympathy, but cunning and treachery; not meekness, but mastery by any means, was the gospel of this madman. To transform oneself into a "blonde beast," ravaging, violating, murdering, was justified by the achievement of power. Should some pro-German friend object that Nietzsche is not the predominant philosophical force of Germany to-day, we reply, "By their fruits ye shall know them." We point to the lurid pages of recent history, so black that they could not be recited

within the hearing of any decent man. The flaming towns, the floating corpses of our own women and children, in days when we were attempting to withhold our judgment and be neutral; the violated women, the bestially maimed bodies of women, little children, and prisoners of war; long lines of captive girls, driven with whips into slavery and prostitution —let his hand forget its cunning and his tongue cleave to his mouth, who in wanton forgetfulness of the just judgments of God proposes to make uncertain peace with such a foe.

Let us read a few passages from the new testament of the devil, that is, from the Nietzschean scriptures:

"What they" (the levelers) "would fain attain with all their strength, is the universal, green-meadow happiness of the herd, together with security, safety, comfort, and allevi-

ation of life for every one; their two most frequently chanted songs and doctrines are called 'Equality of Rights' and 'Sympathy with All Sufferers'—and suffering itself is looked upon by them as something which must be *done away with*. We opposite ones, however, who have opened our eye and conscience to the question how and where the plant 'man' has hitherto grown most vigorously, believe that this has always taken place under the opposite conditions, that for this end the dangerousness of his situation had to be increased enormously, his inventive faculty and dissembling power (his 'spirit') had to develop into subtlety and daring under long oppression and compulsion, and his Will to Life had to be increased to the unconditioned Will to Power:—we believe that severity, violence, slavery, danger

in the street and in the heart, secrecy, stoicism, tempter's art and devilry of every kind—that everything wicked, terrible, tyrannical, predatory, and serpentine in man, serves as well for the elevation of the human species as its opposite:—we do not even say enough when we say *this much*" (Beyond Good and Evil, p. 44).

His ideal men outside of their own country, he says, will be little better than so many uncaged beasts of prey. Hear him: "And the same men who *inter pares* were kept so rigorously in bounds through convention, respect, custom, and gratitude, though much more through mutual vigilance and jealousy *inter pares,* these men who in their relations with each other find so many new ways of manifesting consideration, self-control, delicacy, loyalty, pride, and friendship, these men are in reference to what is out-

side their circle (where the foreign element, a foreign country, begins) not much better than beasts of prey which have been let loose. They enjoy there freedom from all social control; . . . they revert to the innocence of the beast-of-prey conscience, like jubilant monsters, who perhaps come from a ghastly bout of murder, arson, rape, and torture, with bravado and a moral equanimity, as though merely some wild student's prank had been played. . . . It is impossible not to recognize at the core of all these aristocratic races the beast of prey; the magnificent blonde brute, avidly rampant for spoil and victory; this hidden core needed an outlet from time to time, the beast must get loose again, must return into the wilderness" (Genealogy of Morals, p. 11).

"The essential thing, however, in a good and healthy aristocracy is that

it should not regard itself as a function either of the kingship or the commonwealth, but as the significance and highest justification thereof—that it should therefore accept with a good conscience the sacrifice of a legion of individuals, who, for its sake, must be suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments. Its fundamental belief must be precisely that society is not allowed to exist for its own sake, but only as a foundation and scaffolding, by means of which a select class of beings may be able to elevate themselves to their higher duties, and in general to a higher existence. . . ." (Beyond Good and Evil, p. 258).

"At the risk of displeasing innocent ears, I submit that egoism belongs to the essence of a noble soul, I mean the unalterable belief that to a being such as 'we,' other beings

must naturally be in subjection, and have to sacrifice themselves" (Beyond Good and Evil, p. 265).

What words of counsel these to put in the hands of young men who hold toward helpless and weak the role of conquerors. In the knapsack with Faust and the Bible!

That you may see how deeply this gospel of blasphemy has taken root among the people I quote[1] from pastor Wilhelm Phillipps, editor of Berlin's Christian Patriotic Weekly, published recently, and commented on by the Fränkischer Volksfreund. The article was headed "Through Tirpitz to Jesus." It read: "Our Divine Redeemer is a lover of peace. So are we, but the peace that the Lord wants must be a lasting peace, and no peace can be lasting except one that brings

[1] Quoted in Boston Transcript—"Chronicle of the War."

us Courland, the mining regions of Longwy and Briey, and bases for our fleets, to serve as future starting points in any eventual war with England. The latter, our Tirpitz, a man after Christ's own heart, can assure us. He may be appropriately styled the warlike Nazarene, whose ardent patriotism is only equaled by his devotion to his Divine Master, who will be his guide in any future enterprises he may engage in for the glorification of Germanism."

CHAPTER II

GERMAN PHILOSOPHY AS A POLITICAL PRINCIPLE

If sentiments like those quoted in the preceding chapter could have remained confined to the field of academic discussion, we might never have heard of them, but they are only the philosophical evidences of a wider movement, and philosophical ideas have a way of escaping into life. The immoral egotism and intellectual brilliance that gave us Faust was but the outward indication of a deep-moving element in German culture and nationalism. The movement was a potent cause of the Prussian wars, the forcible taking of Schleswig-Holstein, and the rape of Alsace-Lorraine. The

intoxication of egotism received a great impulse in the victories over the Austrians, the Danes, and the French. Then it was that Bismarck betrayed the soul of Germany into the hands of the devil. He proceeded upon the theory that if the people of Germany were well-fed and materially prosperous, they could be so relieved of moral sense that they would unquestioningly follow the autocracy. There has been in history no more patent example of the moral debauch of a great people. But some one arises at this point to accuse me of too severe judgments. Then let me turn the telling of the tale over to a German, yourselves being the judges.

The Kreuzzeitung (Gazette of the Cross), Berlin, published late in 1917,[1] contained the following esti-

[1] Quoted from the Boston Evening Transcript, "Chronicle of the War," December 22, 1917.

mate of Bismarck and his policies: "Can conscience and the necessities of a state march together? In the world of action it is unfortunately very difficult for them to do so. They can and they do, however, in the world of intellect, when an aroused conscience takes on itself the guilt that has arisen from the necessities of a state, and transforms itself into a moral and religious devotion to the state in which that conscience has come into its own.

"Bismarck was one of these conscience-governed appreciators of the necessities of the state, and of their preeminence even over the very conscience that ruled him, so that with open eyes and with frank admission he passed through guilt to that road that should lead to the ennoblement and aggrandizement of the state he served.

"Herein lies the profound difference between Bismarck and the English statesmen. In their actions they too are led solely by political considerations, but they are lacking in that most delicate conscience which honestly calls politics by its right name, and admits guilt when through guilt alone those politics can be served.

"Bismarck represents to us therefore the embodiment of a profound truthfulness, while English statesmen, not being possessed with the requisite moral courage and strength, conceal their politics under a hypocritical mantle of sanctity, which is both disgusting and blasphemous in men who have invented, or at all events employed, the most fiendish mechanical contrivances to kill and mutilate men who have no animus against the enemy but are simply doing their duty in shielding the Fatherland from the

catastrophe of invasion." The writer who quotes this adds: "Asphyxiating gas, liquid flame, disease germs, poisoning wells, infernal machines in ship's bunkers, slavery, rape, murder, arson, forgery, justifiable for Germany's conscience—British tanks, unadulterated, original sin."

The German editor who wrote that article had lost his sense of moral values, and that it could be written and could be received by intelligent people is proof of widespread moral blindness.

CHAPTER III

IMPERSONALISM AS THE ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

The fatal weakness of German philosophy in general, and of the system that now holds the hearts of the people in particular, is its impersonalism. I have already mentioned the cultivation of individuality at the expense of personality, which was apparent in the life of Goethe. By individualism I mean that rank egotism that fattens itself at the expense of all moral and humane considerations. We have had too much of it in our English-speaking lands under the terminology of Superman. Personality, on the other hand, clings to the great moralities as the priceless treas-

ures of the soul, and to these it clings though they lead it to a cross. Personality is the touch of the Divine which may arise in every man, whatever his race, training, or education, and on account of which he is of the utmost value to society, and in accordance with which he claims the right to a normal self-development. When German philosophy overlooks or denies this right to the last and the least man in the world it betrays humanity. Even in those phases in which it has not sold itself outright to the devil it has been burdened with an abstraction of impersonal theories which have helped to prepare the fertile field of moral equivocation and inhumanity. One need not be unappreciative of the great work of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, to recognize their failure to connect with the vital problems of human beings. The reason

for this has been that persons have seemed to them of relatively little moment, and the development of personality of the sacrificial kind as a weakness. This is no new tale or discovery. It has been clear to the best thinkers of Germany for a long time. I shall not soon forget a conversation with one of the greatest of German thinkers. It occurred just before the outbreak of the war. With grave face and tones of great earnestness he described the low state of real religion in his country, and declared that an American could not realize the depth of the religious problem that was facing them.

The inability of German philosophy to reach the ground and to respond to the vital moral needs of man has been the great source of its failure. Its culture has been intellectual at the expense of the finer voices of the heart.

This was the reason that, developing the realm of biblical criticism to a commendable degree, it was able to arrive at results that were only negative and nullifying. The same tinge runs through its inhuman scientific efficiency. And the world is pretty sure to be so sick of the inhumanity and godlessness of its "Kultur" that it will forget any good it has to offer.

This impersonal mood in German philosophy must be taken into account in considering the brutality of the German soldier. He is a part of an impersonalistic system. He is bidden by his officers to shut his heart to every tender feeling. And the result has been that his manhood has been lost somewhere in the meshes of military training, so that he has been guilty of barbarities and refinements of cruelty that savages would despise and be incapable of conceiving.

This impersonal temper has caused Germany likewise to fail in every action that depended on a knowledge of psychology, though she thought her scholars the most efficient in the world.

Her campaign of frightfulness set the red blood surging in a thousand million breasts that might have been supposed inseparably attached to peace. The campaign of frightfulness has been worth to England more than millions of armed men.

Her propaganda of bribery and revolt raised an army for Britain in India and caused the pouring out of the wealth of the Indian princes. Her submarine campaign, designed to keep America from the war, made America's participation inevitable. Her system of spies and espionage misreported the temper of every people. There must be a reason for so uni-

versal a failure. The Boers from Africa, the Anzacs from Australia, the men of Canada, the honest heart of Ireland singing "Tipperary," all responded to the bugle call of the spirit, and Germany might have foreseen this had she had any eyes of the spirit to see with. The very efficiency and impersonalism of her culture blinded her to the existence of values that were deeper and more potent than all the mailed fists in the world. And so the world gathers for her undoing, and the mingled voice of English, American, East Indian, African-Dutch, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, French join in one answer to her terrible boast, and the answer is, "They shall not pass." And the reason that men of all races and tongues and speech and religions, looking over the rim of the world, catch one vision of freedom is because throughout the

world the essential right of manhood is being challenged by an embattled impersonalism, its common foe. Men know full well that if Germany were in any sense to win this war, no spot on God's earth would be worth living in.

CHAPTER IV

IMPERSONALISM A PASSING MOOD

Two forces have been long at work to bring the impersonalistic temper in all places of culture. The common man's criticism of the college curriculum is in a measure just. There may have been more truth than the average scholar has realized in the criticism of the masses that the college has in too many cases succeeded only in training its students away from sympathy and touch with common interest and common life.

This tendency has appeared at two widely sundered poles. At least in theory they are far apart. In fact, they are much closer together than

either partisan will admit. The first is represented by a coldly intellectual dogmatic and abstract philosophy. In this realm we hear much of cosmic consciousness, absolutes, thought-planes and states of consciousness, with scarcely a glimmer of light cast upon the reality and force of the individual soul. To such a philosophy man himself is lost from view in the tireless search for an abstraction. Much of this type of teaching has borne as little relation to life and reality as the dogmas of ancient scholasticism. The main point of failure with such a philosophy has been its rank impersonalism. It was wont to overlook life in order to defend a theory.

This type of thought has, however, been much less in vogue, much less influential, than has the system which divided with it the attention of the

scholarly world. This second type of impersonalism is to be found in great sections of scientific teaching. One might almost say scientific dogma, for many things have been taught as scientific law and gospel which have never reached a surer stage than that of hypothetical reasonableness. Science seeks from multitudinous experiences of action in the natural world to discover the uniformities of that action and classify them as laws. These laws are then erected into magic potency which is deemed to read out of the universe all place for Supreme Will, Purpose, and Personality. What wonder is it that individual responsibility and social reaction are caught in the same maelstrom of discredit and unimportance. Analogous laws are assumed to apply in the biological, social, and political worlds. It is presumed that psycho-

logical action will follow unbending laws. We forget that men cannot be herded in the mass and dealt with in the same way in which we would deal with chemical compounds whose action and reaction we know. Too often the individual becomes a "case" to the extent that we quite forget that he is a self-purposing and living soul. No more striking exhibition of the breakdown of this mechanical psychology has ever been seen than in the scientific psychological methods employed by Germany. Our land has been filled with spies, and their hands have been filled with gold on the supposition that every American has his "price." According to scientific accuracy, we should all have "fallen for" the German propaganda. But unfortunately for Germany she had forgotten we were men, and not "cases" for bribery. A long and searching

"scientific" psychological study of English and Irish and East Indian character yielded equally valuable results. The whole world has been set laughing by this remarkable efficiency. Too much has this trust in a false god of scientific impersonalism betrayed us. It has deftly removed from our educational system a good part of that personal training which is most valuable to the progress of both individual and state. Our classrooms have been too much the places where plastic souls were poured (or at least the attempt was made) into the unyielding mold of psychological formulæ. Those that would not conform we pronounced unfit or defective.

In religion this same spirit has led to the suppression of individual opinion until the person was not considered quite "orthodox" or quite Chris-

tian until he could bring himself to the unrelenting form of a common "experience," or creed or formulary or ritualistic order.

In society we have had our scientific sociological panaceas through which the age was to begin anew by bringing all men to the uninteresting level of commonplace. Our treatment of crime, of problems of labor and capitalism, have each in turn fallen under the ban of "scientific" treatment which forgets the essential part and the interesting part of the problem, the unique and living personalities of men.

All such schemes of impersonalism inevitably prove too much, and theoretically they work too well. They return, like some ugly Frankenstein which we have started and cannot stop, to destroy all that our hands have laboriously wrought. The Ger-

man is correct in thinking of his "Kultur" as scientific. Where he is wrong is in thinking it can be permanently applied to any set of living human beings. His system is fundamentally wrong because man cannot be dealt with as a thing. These days of war are proving the inadequacy of all impersonalistic theories of life. They are loosening their ancient reign and must shortly pass away. In the words of Emerson—

"There are two laws discrete
Not reconciled—
Law for man, and law for thing;
The last builds town and fleet,
But it runs wild,
And doth the man unking."

CHAPTER V

THE WORLD DEMAND FOR A PERSONALISTIC INTERPRETATION OF LIFE

The war is too close to us for any man to imagine that he can comprehend it. But out of the sore and bitter night-watches there come some gleams of promise for a wonderful new world, better than our fondest dreams. There are tokens of a new seriousness, a new religiousness, and new demands in the minds of men. We cannot tell what the future will bring, but we know that future will not be like the old world that is passing away. As well expect to thrust a fledgling back into its shell as to think for a moment that the multi-

plied lessons of men will result only in an effort to rebuild the world that has gone to pieces. The foremost demand of this new world will be for a personal interpretation of life and history. The reason I am sure of this is because the war is itself the world-wide revolt against the impersonalistic interpretation of life, society, and history. We are coming to world-wide understandings of the intrinsic value of one person. The Christmas bells never rang in all the years of Christian history a more meaningful or holy song than at this latest Christmas. The song that sings to-day in the hearts of earth's unnumbered multitudes is the song that rang first from angel lips over the starry fields of Bethlehem; "Peace on the earth to men of good will." The scattered tribes of earth have looked into each other's eyes with a new understand-

ing and have sworn with the oath of a great sacrifice that every institution, philosophy, king or potentate that dares to break the world's best dream, and reenact the slaughter of the innocents, shall be cast into the pit, and that the sword shall not be sheathed until the song of Bethlehem can tell a message of truth for the last and feeblest child of man in all the world. The demand is a demand for a new humanity—for a fair chance for the mind and soul of every man born into the world. From city slums and mountain loneliness, from where the great river threads the jungle, from the vastness of the Arabian deserts, from the crowded pestholes of India—from everywhere men are showing the devotion of unconsidering sacrifice, and prejudices of race are being washed out in seas of blood; and now we see that to which our eyes

have been too long holden, that we are the children of one Father, and that not one can suffer in his loneliness and misery without injury to all. Materialism that forgets the man behind the individual, abstract philosophy that makes concrete wrong appear like an abstract right—these will have been found forever wanting.

The one thing that rises out of the wreck of war is the unity of our common interest, and the things that have long divided us appear in their true insignificance.

This temper is evidenced by many occurrences in the war, the stories of which are too familiar to repeat. The readiness of chaplains of all faiths to minister religiously to men without distinction of creed shows a universal falling back upon the essentials of religion. Now a Roman Catholic

priest undergoes great personal peril to pray with a dying Protestant; now a Presbyterian hears the dying confession of a Catholic. A rabbi ministers with a crucifix to a dying man, or Protestants preserve order for the Mass, only to have the compliment returned at the hour of Protestant worship. New religious understandings, new community of feeling, new sense of the simple essentials of Christian life and faith shine out like stars over the murky blackness of the night. The unessential things which divide men are discovered in new and less favorable light. Deeds of undying heroism and sacrifice, manlinesses which show the truest nobility of soul are found not peculiar to any one creed or race of men. While there are being displayed the most reeking depths of inhumanity and worse than bestiality, there are innumerable evi-

dences of sacrificial devotion and nobility in lives where it would be least suspected. If the meanness and dastardliness of lives devoted to wrong principles is being shown in a way more complete and tragic than the world has ever known, it is also true that the ennobling value of right principles and a just cause has never been displayed so clearly.

And men who are thus discovering their common noble qualities are being welded in sympathy as iron runs together in the white heat of a crucible. Where there is discovered to be a common interest and a common sympathy, a common expression of faith will ultimately be demanded.

A startling illustration of this breaking down of barriers has appeared during the war in the columns of the "Churchman" in the Boston Evening Transcript.

The first is taken from the American Lutheran Survey and follows:

"It is said that many cultured Jews have of late come to recognize and acknowledge the power and the truth of Christianity. One of them is quoted as saying: 'We are being irresistibly carried forward toward a spiritual crisis which can end only in spiritual bankruptcy. The gospel is a resistless power which is slowly but surely influencing our minds and making us impotent to maintain our opposition to the Nazarene. Willy-nilly, we are compelled to admire his teaching, his life, and his work. Our position is untenable; we will have to yield our ground, as hard as it is to acknowledge an error.' This is the only solution of the Jewish question, internally and externally. As soon as a thoughtful Jew has become truly acquainted with the actual picture of

Jesus in the New Testament, he involuntarily bows his knees before the supernatural Greatness, and says, 'Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips.' That which prevents us from accepting Christianity is not Christ but the Christians. They accord us hatred and scorn. . . . It is this hatred that is still holding us together as a nation. As prominent a personage as Miss Lazarus, the writer says, 'We are standing on the threshold and do not know where we are to go.' What a marvel might be unfolded," continues the Lutheran Survey, "if Christians enough were to realize that the time of Israel's harvest has come!"

We are given another expression of the world longing for unity from another source. "Many of our people are getting tired of the expression 'salvation by character,'" said an ac-

tive Unitarian to the writer this week. "They have lost their objection to the expression 'saved by grace,' and would be glad to see it become general." He went on to explain that it was simply a recognition of the fact that in God we live and move and have our being, and that every good and perfect gift cometh from him, even the gift of character, and that without him we can do nothing. "We are all the children of God created by him, made for a purpose, and saved by his creative plan, which is grace. Whether we accept the idea of atonement by substitution, or atonement by the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' which is a symbol of the all-suffering God himself, we are all saved by his grace if we are saved at all. To deny this is atheism." The writer adds: "Can it be in these thrilling days, so mysterious in the

evidence they show of the working of some mighty power, that God in breaking down the partition walls and burning up in a fierce conflagration the barriers that divide and antagonize nations, races and churches, finds the principal obstacles to his efforts in the prejudices and hatreds in the hearts of his own chosen ones?"

Now, a world in which such deeds can be done, in which such thoughts can be sincerely and widely expressed, is a plastic world, a world that is lighted with the great hope of a new spirit of humanitarianism—yea, more than that, a world which is prepared as no world has ever before been prepared to accept the essential teachings of Jesus as the rule and guide of life, and to enter actually into that brotherhood which is implied by the acceptance of God as our

common Father. No more can we allow the last and feeblest brother of man to suffer in bitter or in sullen neglect.

CHAPTER VI

AMERICA AND THE SUPER-MAN

The source of the modern streams of influence form a most interesting field for study. To these streams America is related by connections the most direct. There is no question, I presume, of the influence of the Renaissance upon modern life, nor that the forces which led to the settling of America and its eventual political dependence were long preparing and developing. There would be no question of the common origin of many of the political and social ideals later realized both in American and in European life.

The boldness of the Renaissance philosophy taught by Bacon, Hobbes,

Descartes, and Spinoza was startling to a world that had been long accustomed to an anæmic philosophical dogmatism. But their thought was all a part of the general movement of the newly discovered world, and it laid the foundations for the period of the Enlightenment. It is quite impossible to consider that movement out of which sprang the French Revolution, the American war for Independence, and the foundations of modern Germany apart from the influences of the Enlightenment and the elements which that period in philosophy gathered from the Renaissance. Perhaps the greatest political influence of the time centered in the philosophy which was set forth by Rousseau. Rousseau became the father of modern romanticism and has exerted a profound and often unappreciated influence upon the present age. In France and

America he became the spokesman for a rising tide of individualism which threatened every political institution. The movement was pervaded with naturalism, skepticism, and the utilitarian ethics of Spinoza. It was deistic on the religious side. It was a pronounced individualism. It was a part of the general reaction against institutions which had repressed both spiritual and political initiative. It was the cry of the common man for expression, but it lacked the spiritual element. In France and in America certain factors operated to give this individualism an appropriate exercise and outworking which greatly served to rationalize and modify it. In France this individualism was sobered and brought under discipline as the result of political readjustment and responsibility which resulted in an orderly republic.

Similar influences modified the movement in America. No element works for conservatism like responsibility. In America there were not only the problems arising from the founding of the new state but also from a period given over to pioneering and settlement. Then came the agitation over slavery, culminating in the great war, which added a profound humanitarian and moral element to the American spirit. Through struggle America at last found her soul. The depth of that influence is suggested by the constant appeal in the present crisis to the moral decisions of Lincoln.

The movement of individualism was destined to take a different turn in Germany. Her thinkers were likewise profoundly moved by romanticism. We are told by Hensel[1] that

[1] Quoted by Paul More, in Shelburne Essays, 6th Series, p. 215.

"Kant and Herder, Goethe and Schiller are not to be conceived without Rousseau, and through them is formed the new science, the new philosophy, the new poetry of German Idealism."

The very heart of Goethe's philosophy lay in the claim for the rights of individualism. This claim was aided and abetted by the Spinozean ethics, which characterized the romantic movement. The peculiar attitude toward one's own shortcomings and sins, the denial to repentance of any place in moral well-being, gave to that individualism an impulse wholly lawless and dangerous. The doctrine that the individual is right in seeking his own development at any moral cost and without regard to the rights of others, has had most baleful consequences. And such was the philosophy of Goethe. The popular worship

accorded Goethe in the German world prepared the way for the political ethics of Bismarck and the essential prophet was provided in Nietzsche.

It is interesting to note that the individualism of Rousseau was social as well as selfish. He thought of the good of the mass as well as of the good of the individual. But the Goethean and Nietzschean individualism was aristocratic and not democratic. The democratic or meliorative element in Rousseau was destined to find voice in Germany through Karl Marx. It is significant that these systems of common origin stand now face to face in conflict in Germany herself.

Romanticism has not lacked disciples in America. The influence of Rousseau's ideas of education has been pronounced, and far more influ-

ential within a quarter century than at any time previously. This influence has been of questionable tendency both in academic and social life. Rousseau's idea of education was "to make instinct instead of experienced judgment the basis of education, impulse instead of control, unbridled liberty instead of obedience, nature instead of discipline. To foster the emotions as if the uniting bond of mankind were sentiment rather than reason might seem so monstrous a perversion of the truth as to awaken abhorrence in any considerable reader." To which the writer adds: "One wonders curiously, or sadly sometimes, that the preachers who abdicate the fear of God for humanitarianism, and the teachers who surrender the higher discipline for subservience to individual choice, do not see, or, seeing, do not dread,

the goal toward which they are facing." [1]

Fortunately, this movement has not struck deeply into American life. American individualism has been tempered by a strong conservatism. In Germany, on the contrary, where there has been little free and popular government the development, as is usual when confined to theory, has taken on a radical form. The surest cure for radicalism is to make it responsible, so America has long possessed the safety-valve of political action, and even the easy exploitation of educational fads has not been without a certain advantage.

But America's individualism has been turned into humanitarian channels by the force of her historic position and her spiritual achievement.

[1] More, Shelburne Essays, 6th Series, pp. 230-231, 241.

Evils have gained the upper hand. Slavery, greed, capitalism, saloonism all have been in power during moments of reaction, but every crisis has so far found the heart of her people morally and ethically sound. It has never been possible to turn her permanently away from the rights of the individual, as he exists in society and in political life.

It is most fitting for America to take her place in this struggle for freedom. It was to have been expected that when the great eventual conflict for human liberty should come she would find her place beside all other men of good will. America has been intensely personalistic in her ideals. The foundation stone of her democracy has been the unalloyed worth and dignity of the human spirit. It was the vast ideal of our great martyr, Abraham Lincoln. The one

reason for America's being is that everywhere the physical, social, and spiritual rights of man may be achieved.

CHAPTER VII

THE VOICE AT ARMAGEDDON

Now the storm is on the world—a storm so fierce that the old landmarks are obliterated.

> "The ancient stars are tired and dim
> And no new star announces Him."

Upon our day is cast the necessity of groping out of the darkness, with no surer star than that of Bethlehem. But it is no day for pessimism. The old order passes away with noise and great heat that a new and better order may come in. The meaning of it all is a better world, a new heaven and a new earth to be bought by great sacrifice. What are the voices that shall speak when Armageddon is done?

Shall the final type of manhood be the blonde beast of whom Nietzsche tells, whose contempt for womanhood thus finds expression in Zarathustra? "Man shall be trained for war, and woman for the recreation of the warrior: all else is folly."[1] "Thou goest to Women? Do not forget thy whip!"[2]

Or shall it be that finer spirit of manhood expressed in the lines of Laurence Binyon, who touches the springs that run deepest at Armageddon, those which give victory over the beast when man meets man in conflict. The lines are addressed

To Women

"Your hearts are lifted up, your hearts
That have foreknown the utter price.
Your hearts burn upward like a flame
Of splendor and of sacrifice.

[1] XVIII, p. 75, Zarathustra.
[2] Ibid., p. 77.

VOICE AT ARMAGEDDON

"For you too to battle go
Not with marching drums and cheers,
But in the watch of solitude
And through the boundless night of fears.

"And not a shot comes blind with death,
And not a stab of shell is pressed
Home, but invisibly it tore
And entered first a woman's breast."

When Dante made pilgrimage through hell there was one strain as present there and as significant as it was in paradise. Up the steep sides of the pit of agony and flame, above the blackness of blasphemies and hate, reechoing also along the toilsome sides of purgatory, the song was ever heard: "Amore, amore, amore" —"Love, love, love." To the angels it was but the echo of the deeper song that burned, an eternal flame of joy within their hearts. To the pilgrims through purgatory it brought refresh-

ing dews of aspiration and hope, and to the unrepentant who lay in the pit the song that was aspiration and joy to the others was bitterest punishment. Whatever storms may shake the old world, the final song that shall survive all other songs shall be the song of eternal love. The blonde beast shall not utter the final nor the authoritative speech at Armageddon.

I listen to the voice of him who spoke over the death throes of an older world as he stood in the spirit on Patmos on the Lord's Day. I hear him saying across the centuries, "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

Lieutenant H. P. M. Jones, Machine Gun Corps, British Army, is reported in the press to have written

from France a few days before he "went west" these words:

"Believe me, we are on the eve of a great revelation. All this mastery of the air, X-rays, wireless telegraphy, and other wonders of electricity, and other marvels of modern science—coupled with the ever-widening search after the occult, the mystic and the spiritual—all these things, I say, are but the premonitory rumblings, the signs and symptoms of the Great Discovery—a manifestation which shall lift the veil which at present hides from us the Secret of the Ages. Yes, the veil is lifting, and soon Whence and Whither will be revealed.

"I believe that this mighty upheaval of the nations is an integral part of the scheme of the Great Awakening. I believe we are witnessing the last demonstration on the part of Germany of the primitive savagery

and barbarism from which we sprang, and that equally on the part of the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin Allies they are being tried in the furnace of Sacrifice and Exaltation, preparatory to entering realms of knowledge and enlightenment as yet unexplored. The Slavs are being tested for their fitness for a big step forward, and I believe they will in the end come well through the ordeal. The Teuton will have to make a new start, and the Turk will be sent back to Asia, to await there his fate when the nascent nations of the Far East reach the new milestone in their destiny. . . . That is my reading of the inner purport of this long-ordained eruption.

"But to each of us it may have at least this meaning—that each of us has become a soldier in the army of God."

Before we reach a world of

vaster powers we must decide the moral use of power. We must determine now whether we shall use it for the few or for all humanity. Until by climbing our cross we show a spiritual mastery sufficient for that better day we cannot enter into our kingdom.

You who are going now to the fields of action in the world are going to responsibilities and duties greater than have ever been known to men; some of you, many perhaps, will taste the deep bitterness of sacrifice, but you will go, I trust, with the calm faith expressed by one who but recently passed beyond the shadows and the night, William Dewitt Hyde, of Bowdoin, who sang:

"Creation's Lord, we give thee thanks
That this thy world is incomplete,
That battle calls our marshaled ranks,
That work awaits our hands and feet.

"That thou hast not yet finished man,
That we are in the making still—
As friends who share the Maker's plan,
As sons who know the Father's will.

"Beyond the present sin and shame,
Wrong's bitter, cruel, scorching blight,
We see the beckoning vision flame,
The blessed kingdom of the Right.

"What though the Kingdom long delay,
And still with haughty foes must cope?
It gives us that for which to pray,
A field for toil and faith and hope.

"Since what we choose is what we are,
And what we love we yet shall be,
The goal may ever shine afar—
The will to win it makes us free."

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